# Congo News Letter

JUNE 1956

MRS. PETER FREDERICKSON
1865 — 1955

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# CONGO NEWS LETTER

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# *THE TWAIN SHALL MEET*

*Though bowed to stone and wood, carved out like man,*
*In fear of unknown dark, they do not dare*
*To hope that with the light of day they then*
*Can wake to morn, set free from fear, fcaremor.*

*Though bowed to gold and power of silver strong,*
*No fear of man in age at hand, or god*
*In age to come, they travel on along*
*Life's thoroughfares which others dare not tread.*

*Can those who fear and those who dare e're hold*
*A common ground of unity of soul?*
*Can those who bow to wood, who bow to gold*
*Be brought to bow before the self-same goal?*

*The twain shall meet when bowed to cross of wood*
*They stand as void of self, alone He stood.*

—NAOMI R. BUBECK

# *A CROWN OF LIFE*

*In Memoriam to Mrs. Peter Frederickson*

IN the summer of 1954 I met a little white-haired woman — confined to a wheel-chair — whom I have not been able to forget. I remember walking in awe up to her tiny cottage there in Pasadena, the city of roses, as I realised that I was actually to see a pioneer missionary who, as a young bride of 22, had arrived at Palabala, Congo in July of 1887. That was only 10 years after Henry Morton Stanley, arriving in the same area at the end of his 999 day trek across Africa, sent his terse message, written in Palm oil, to the little post of Boma:

> DEAR SIR,
> I arrive from Zanzibar with 115 persons, men, women and children. We are dying of hunger. The natives refuse vehemently our cloth, beads and wire. Here one can only buy provisions on the market days and we cannot wait....In your quality of Christian and gentleman, I dare hope you will not reject my request... We are in the greatest distress;....

The post-script added :

> As it is possible that you do not recognize my name, I add that it was I who found Livingstone in 1871.

Now I was to meet a woman who had had the courage to enter Africa during that time when it was the white man's grave, when slaves were bought and sold at the regular native markets; who had arrived during the very year that Stanley's expedition was sent to rescue the Emin Pacha from the same fate as General Gordon at the hands of the Madhists.....Yet it was not only with awe, but with a certain amount of pity that I approached. Here was a woman who, with a spirit of devotion, courage and even adventure, had served 34 years in the Congo and spent almost that amount of time in *retirement*, Her beloved husband, Peter Frederickson had died at the age of 83 in 1929. Perhaps she would be a little bitter after these long years of "idleness". Also at the age of 89 her memory was short; she probably would have no interest in a missionary back from a first term in the Congo.

I need not have worried. "Speak to her in *Kikongo*," whispered her daughter Lila, "She'll like that."

"Kiambote, Mama Fe," I said, but almost forgot the rest of my speech as I gazed at the fragile figure before me, who had been humming happily as we entered. Her blue eyes were bright with life and joy; her skin fair and soft, delicately tinted with pink; the soft-cropped white curls of her hair seemed to form a halo around the sweet face. Almost she might have been a Dresden doll in coloring and fragility but there was too much *joie-de-vivre* in her expression for that. And when I began to talk of Congo; places and people that she might have known, the joy turned to radiance. ... Leaving finally, I determined to find out more about this woman who could sit in her wheel-chair patiently waiting for death's call to join her husband and glowing with an inner happiness which I have seldom seen.

Back in Congo I noticed that at least once or twice a week our morning hymn was authored or translated by M. Frederickson. I remembered the happy humming and concluded that music must have been one of her talents ... In our hymn book — compiled by four missions—at least 28 hymns are the work of Mama Fe. In parts of her husband's diary; in the Frederickson memorial number of the C.N.L. (1931) and from tales of Congolese leaders who had known her, I discovered more:

When Mattie Reuter was a little girl in Norway her favorite books were those on Physiology and Hygiene. Growing up, she was trained as a teacher but medical books continued to fascinate her and later in her missionary career she was to be both teacher and nurse—even doctor. In 1887 Peter Frederickson, a Danish missionary on furlough after five years in the Congo, came to Norway to speak to the Baptist and other Free churches in that country. He met Mattie; knew that she was the right partner for him and before long they were married and on their way back to the Congo, serving under the A.B.F.M.S. which some years earlier had taken over the stations in the Lower Congo opened originally by the Livingstone Inland Mission.

They worked for a time at Palabala where Mrs. Frederickson began the task of learning the Kikongo language. So interested was she in getting it correctly, learning the idioms and

thinking "native" that she was to speak Kikongo as few white people ever learn to. After also spending some time at Banza Manteke, Mr. Frederickson wished to find a new area untouched by Christianity and so in 1890, along with the Rev. Emanuel Broholm they opened the Sona Bata area. At that time there was not a Christian between the Inkisi river and Léopoldville. The following year Mr. Broholm died of hematuric fever. Rev. and Mrs. Nelson replaced him but were to die of the same fever nine years later.

The work for this district was carried on from Kifwa until the site of the railroad was determined and it was moved to the permanent station of Sona Bata. Mrs. Frederickson treated thousands of sick every year and trained many Congolese medical helpers — so well that some of them later headed up the medical dispensary work in important companies. She took a course in the treatment of sleeping-sickness and other tropical diseases at Léopoldville under doctor Van den Branden, which was a great help to the work. (Mr. Frederickson had observed surgical operations in England during his furlough to help him in his part of the medical responsabilities).

Mama Fe, as she was lovingly called, also had an orphanage for neglected children and was one of the first of the pioneers to set up a boarding-school for boys and girls; also one of the first to take girls into her home to train them. Thus she became doctor, teacher and "Mother" to her adopted people. Her first dispensary was the back porch of her house; later she had a dispensary building with two rooms and a grass lean-to; and mud hospital wards. A few years before she retired the mud houses were replaced with brick wards with cement floors. She healed not only with medicine but with love and the help of the greatest of Physicians; and many were drawn to God as they came to know Him through her.

Mama and Tata Fe had six children of their own though one of them was buried at sea. Many and hard were the separations which husband and wife faced or children and parents in those days before modern medicine allowed children to be brought up in the Congo. But in 1921 Mrs. Frederickson's serious illness and her husband's advanced age (75) caused them to say goodbye

forever to that land for which they had sacrificed so much. The following year they were retired and at last got to be near their family. In 1928 Tata Fe went to enjoy the fulness of the "New Life" which had been the theme of so much of his teaching and preaching.

Mama Fe waited exactly 26 years to rejoin Peter Frederickson, but the day of reunion arrived finally on December 6, 1955. It seemed fitting that the morning after the news came to us in Congo—our chapel hymn should have been Mattie Frederickson's translation of "The Old Rugged Cross." The chorus could have been her epitaph:

*Now I will love the cross*
*Until I've won victory on earth.*
*I'll keep on with the cross*
*That I may change it for a crown of life.*

— R. UHLINGER

## *AS YE SOW*

by NGUNGA ELISABETH

*Among the many medical workers trained by Mrs. Frederickson, there were two girls so devoted to their task that people said of them, "A life-work was done in the training of these two consecrated girls." One of those aid-nurses was Ngunga Elisabeth, still active as the wife of the Ngombe village pastor. Not only does she continue to serve her people as teacher, nurse and pastor's wife, but she raised her daughter—and Mama Fe's namesake—Mattie Marie as a living memorial to all that Mrs. Frederickson strove for. Ngunga's Mattie became one of the first two girls in all of Congo to receive a full nursing diploma; and remains one of the few to ever attain this. (Nursing is mostly a man's work in Congo.) Married to an active Christian layman and mother of 5 children, Mattie still holds down the full-time job as nurse for our mission at Léopoldville. Here Mama Ngunga gives a glimpse of the "planting" that reaped this harvest.*

IN the year 1912 I went to Sona Bata because I was ill. Mama Fe carefully cared for me. When I'd received my health my

parents came to get me. Mama Fe said, "Don't go. I will keep you and raise you." I also wanted this. My parents had brought 25 francs to pay my medicine, but Mama (Frederickson) gave it back ; she wanted only me. I entered school and she worked with me to teach me her habits and ways. Sometimes it was hard: I did not like to be told what to do but she taught me the Word of God and I relented. I was baptized on September 25, 1912.

Sometimes I slept at Mama Fe's house. I worked with her at the House of Medicine together with my beloved friend, Mbudi. Sometimes I helped to cook *Mama's* food at her house and learned to prepare the table and make the beds. Sometimes the village women would send for us to teach them school. Many, many of them learned to read and many, many of them became friends of Mama Fe. They went to her house and were made very happy there and she helped them greatly in sickness and their children too. She was a person of mercy. She taught them the things of God.

I was like her own child. She wished to teach me all things. I also loved her greatly. She was as my very own Mother.

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## *MAMA FREDERICKSON: WE LOVED HER*

by KIKWAKWA MOISE

Village of Kifua.

TRULY, when I heard the news of the death of Mama Frederickson, it brought great sorrow to my heart. But such is the will of Father God who sets the time that each of us shall stay on earth. I know that God has called Mama "Fe" to go receive the rewards for what she did here on earth, showing Father God and the name of Jesus Christ and the Spirit Helper to people.

Mama Fe helped in the building of the place here where the love of God could be shown, and how Jesus received the way of death so that people may be saved through Him, who is also our Advocate before God. When she was at Kinzila she started the school for boys and girls, whom she loved very much. Everyone

passed along the word that Mama Fe was very good and filled with love for the Congo people.

Then it was decided to build at Kisantu, and a house was bought also at Kifwa where they could sleep and eat. At Kisantu they built a house and a compound. Mama Fe put at Kisantu as teachers Nsitukodila, Kindele, and Nianda. Among others from Kisantu who learned in the school were: Chief Kioni, Lenga, Sita, Mabonso and Lutangu. But the Catholics became very angry when they saw this school and compound, and reported to the government that Kisantu was their place. The chief government man came and decided that the Catholics had been there for some time, as evidenced by the name Kisantu which was Kikongo way of saying Saint for Saint Mary. So Tata Frederickson was told that he would have to build some place else. This made Mama Fe sad because they had to leave her school.

So as they had to build elsewhere and had already bought a house at Kifwa, they went there. Mama Fe took her teachers from Kisantu to Kifwa and began classes in the building they had bought. But not a single child from Kifwa itself came to the school, so one of the teachers told Mama Fe that the teachers wanted to leave. She asked him why ? He replied because no children are coming to school. Then Mama Fe said they couldn't leave, but they should go get some of the children who had been in the school at Kisantu, then the Kifwa children will see them in school and will want to learn too. So they brought six children. When we saw them learning to read the A's, O's, and E's, and others reading in the Bible, then I and Bangu went closer to watch. Then we argued with the teachers and asked them to send the children away, which they did. Then we told the teacher to write our names on a piece of paper. When the children were called back we showed them the paper and they read our names. Bangu and I looked at each other and said it was a lie and that they must have overheard. So they went away again and we gave the teacher the names of people who were already dead, but the children read the names just as we had given them. Truly our thoughts came alive from this and we saw much surprise. Mama Fe talked with us too about it, and from that time Bangu and I began to go to school.

Others came to the station school too, and everyone, boys and girls, loved Mama Fe very, very much. When school was out for the day we would sing — "Our school is finished, we are separating, greetings, greetings, we all love one another". Then the girls would take hold of Mama Fe's dress and her hands and walk to her house with her. She was always so happy in her work, just like Silas.

One day I went to ask her about the hymn we had just sung, about Jesus being our Saviour, and that we are all in His hands. I followed her to the house and asked her if I too was in His hands ? She said, "Yes, you too are in His hands." Then I asked "Does He love me ?-even me ?" She replied, "Truly, He loves especially you, if you also love Him." This made me very happy.

Later I went as teacher to the village of Yidi, where I had thirty-six children in my class. One time Mama Fe called me to her house and read to me John 15 : 4–9. Then she said, "You asked if Jesus loves you. Look how He loves you, and see how He has given you thirty-six children to teach His words. Doesn't that prove that He loves you ?"

I said, "Thank you," and not long after Bangu and I were the first to be baptized at Kifwa.

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## *ONE MAN'S FAMILY IN THE LEO CHRISTIAN CENTER*

by Arley Brown

MUKOKO pushed his way eagerly through the crowded classroom to the bright African sunlight. He was a big boy and he ducked slightly to avoid the low door-frame. It couldn't have been built any higher since Mukoko's classroom used to be a lean-to garage, converted with cement blocks and wire screening to house the sixth grade. The boys had put up a mat ceiling themselves to make it cooler. He joined the others as they stood outside looking across the road. They were unusally quiet, especially for teenagers, as they came out one by one. There in the

field before them rose two tall wooden forms. They were to be the pillars for the new Christian School. The boys and girls talked seriously of how high the school would be — they rarely entered a two story building such as it would be. Many of them had been in our A.B.F.M.S. school since pre-school kindergarten. Even then the official inspector had reported the few classrooms crowded and inadequate. But by the time Mukoko was in second grade and the mission requested permission to build a new school, many more children had entered. Some had to be turned away. Each year began with hopes that the new school would then be built, and ended with hopes renewed for the next. Each year room was somehow made for more children, but many were turned away. Last year eighteen classrooms of various sizes and descriptions were found to house almost eight hundred children. Then, in a way unbelievable to us all, the obstacles were hurdled one by one and the building was started. No wonder Mukoko and his friends are still awe-struck. For, more than we can realize, God's hand has brought us this good gift.

That night, as Mukoko sat eating with his brothers and sisters he said, "Father did you know that next year when the new school is finished we will have a seventh grade?" "That's good news, son," said Ntombo, "But I'm afraid you'll be too old to enter." "Perhaps, but think of Nsungu and Leku. They'll be in fourth grade next year. Leku will have to work hard though, because not many girls get through 6th grade. Maybe, when I get a job, I can go with you to evening school at the Mission. What's it like, Father ?"

Ntombo was pumping up the Coleman lantern. "They just began the evening school last month, but it's already filled up the rooms in the old printing house, and there are three classes meeting in the missionaries' houses. We have a Bible class together to start with, then everyone scatters to their other classes."

"You take English, don't you, Father?" said Leku proudly. "Yes, daughter. That seems to be first choice with most of them. But many are in the French classes, and there is talk of a class in mathematics."

"Oh, Mother, you should go and learn to read," called Nsungu. Makaya was stooping over the little fire outside, heat-

ing the water for tea. "Maybe I will," she smiled, "when the twins are a little older. Almost every Sunday in church somebody gets their certificate for learning to read in Kikongo or Lingala. Last Sunday 20 people got their certificates. The women's classes are in the mornings. But there is a long list of women waiting to begin."

"Some meet at the mission and some at school, don't they?" asked Leku. "I saw Mfinda's mother this morning. She said she hoped she would learn to read soon because whenever Mfinda was home he would make her practice reading."

Everyone laughed. "But we wouldn't torment you, Mother," said Mukoko teasingly.

"In truth," replied Makaya, we are finding great help at the mission these days. Many new women are coming to baby clinic. They are crowding into the Tuesday Women's service, too."

"You should see the women's sewing classes at the mission now," exclaimed Nsungu, "quilts and women and babies all over the lawn !"

Makaya laughed. "Yes, but best of all is that a great number of new women become followers and have joined the follower's classes just through baby clinic and reading and sewing classes. We must do our part to help them become strong Christians and church members."

There was a pause. Then Leku asked, "Father, what does Christian Center mean ? That's what the sign says at church, but why doesn't it just say "A.B.F.M.S." or "Saint Anne" or something?"

"That's a hard question, daughter," said Ntombo thoughtfully, "but I think our pressure lamp may help me to answer. When we are far from our house at night we can first see our lamp shining with its pure white light among the many smaller ones. If we follow its rays closer we find our home, a Christian home. And our home is like one of those rays. If we follow all those Christian "rays" to where they meet together with the Lord Jesus Christ, that should be the brightest place in town, and that is why we call our meeting place the *Christian* Center."

Then Ntombo called his family together, the pressure lamp "shhing" them for silence. Quietly they read the Scriptures, and

prayed for the thousands in Leo who have not found saving faith in Christ.

## *WE LEARN TO READ*

by Lee Weaver

TALA elilingi oyo, Mama. Ye akosala nini? Ee, akobondela. Eteni oyo ejali "bo". Sasaipi, tanga biteni oyo: *bo, ba, bi, bu.*"

This might be the conversation you would hear if you should drop by our women's reading classes some morning. This class, of course, is in Lingala, but we have two others in Kikongo. The womens' literacy classes are just a part of our ever-expanding Christian Center program here at Léo. Started last September, these classes would be swamped with women eager to learn to read if we didn't keep the enrollment controlled and very limited. More than seventy women signed up on the day of the first announcement. These were put on a list and called two or three at a time as there was space in the classes. We try to keep the classes small, admitting new ones only as the older members are "graduated" into the "Reader's Class." As soon as a woman has satisfactorily finished the first Laubach book *Tanga Kikongo* or *Tanga Lingala*, she receives a certificate at the Sunday morning service. How proud husbands and children are when their wives and mothers march up to the front to receive their certificates. And how pleased the women are at this small sign of recognition of their progress.

Teaching the literacy classes is both rewarding and frustrating! Some of the women learn so quickly, and are able to make great strides in the first few days. These usually progress to the "Readers' Class" within a week or two, and need only occasional help to become quite fluent readers. One of these was Beloti, who came and read the entire syllabaire in the first day. When we asked if she had read before, she said, "Oh Mama, only a little when I went to the village school for a few months as a little girl!" Yet with those few months of schooling years ago

as a background, she was able to learn very quickly, and is now reading in the third book of "Stories of Jesus".

Others find it much more difficult. With no background to prepare them for literacy, letters and words and books are unbelievably mysterious. I think of Ngalula who has been in class about a month. She tries so hard the perspiration runs down her face! She is now able to read the first book, but mostly from memory. She recognizes the words and syllables when they are in their proper place in the book or on the flash cards, but just can't seem to make the transition when she finds them in another place ! But we are still working, and looking forward to that day when she'll finally see how it all goes together. Then we will really feel that all the time and effort has been worth-while.

There are only a very few who just can't learn to read. These women are usually discouraged very soon, and quit coming to class. But some of them are as persistent as they are hopeless. *One Who Looks For Quarrels* is one of these. A faithful church member, a good mother, (her Kilo-aged child has an excellent health record), she just doesn't have the comprehension to learn reading. Yet she comes faithfully daily rain or shine, and has since the classes began ! We haven't the heart to tell her not to come any more, so just keep on going over and over the words and syllables with her. However, there are, happily, very few who just can't learn, so that usually our efforts have a successful end!

It is a small work we do, and yet is an important contribution to the rapid advancement of Congo Womanhood. In this booming land, women are only now emerging into their proper place as partners with their men. Until recently the women were useful mainly as beasts of burden and as child-bearers. But with the light of Christianity to guide, education is becoming a stepping-stone to that mental and spiritual freedom which must accompany their physical elevation. Pray with us that in this literacy work we may help the Women of Congo to understand and appreciate what Jesus meant when He said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

# *ONLY ONE MOUNTAIN TO CLIMB*

by Marjorie Sharp

"THERE'S only one mountain to climb," we were assured as Ruth Engwall and I left for a six-day Christian Home Institute in the village of Luanika 50 kilometers from Banza Manteke. We had driven 30 kilometers to Septante but the rest of the trip was to be made on foot up hill and down dale. As we began unloading our equipment from the car a group of school girls eagerly came forward to meet us. They had walked from Luanika the day before to meet us and carry our gear. The rest of of our group was composed of two of our station teachers, a former Banza Manteke student now following the Pastor's Training course at Kimpese, and three of our Banza Manteke school girls. The next few days our efforts would be united with those of our Congolese colleagues seeking to bring men and women to an understanding of what a Christian home is and what it can mean in their lives.

The people of Septante had prepared food for the carriers and the others in our party and while they remained behind to eat, Ruth and I, knowing we would soon be overtaken, started on the long trek accompanied by one of the carriers. Even with a card table and two folding chairs on his head, a lantern in his hand, Lutete would soon have outdistanced us had he been by himself. We were to learn before the day was finished that perhaps there was only one mountain to climb, but there were enough hills to make walking in the heat of the Congo afternoon sun no lark. Eventually we were overtaken by our barefooted carriers who experienced no difficulty in going up hill and down even with foodboxes, suitcases, and campbeds balanced on their heads.

Certainly the foot path we followed was an interesting one. At times it was stony, at times sandy, and often grassy. In some places the grass on either side of the path was higher than our heads. Sometimes the path was muddy, sometimes dry. Occasionally we found our way through small green forests, lush with tropical vegetation. Much of the trip was hot and steamy, but the cool breeze now and then offered a bit of refresh-

ment. Often we could see the village of Septante in the background, but finally it faded from view and at last we saw the mountain behind which lay our destination point. At dusk tired and dusty from our afternoon's hike, we arrived at a stream outside the village of Kiemba. How cool the water felt to our feet, unaccustomed as they were to walking such a long distance.

The Congolese people are friendly and generous by nature and in very little time a nice mud brick home had been offered to us. The women came bringing us gifts of bananas in addition to seeing that water was provided for us. Their hospitality of course extended to the carriers and the teachers who were in our group. Later in the evening we all assembled outdoors under the beautiful star-filled, moonlight flooded Congo sky and worshipped together, Christ's love knowing no limitations.

In the morning we lifted our eyes to the hills and beheld the village of Luanika fringed by tall coconut palms. The mountain looked difficult to climb, but we were told that "we go up in secret" meaning that since we went around the mountain, the ascent wasn't as steep. A few hours later we approached the village and were met there by our carriers who had waited for us that we might all enter together. We were warmly welcomed by the people, who true to their custom, were soon bestowing gifts of sugar cane, beans, palmnuts, peanuts, eggs, and coconuts, on our party. Some of the women had made an extra trip to the stream in order that we might all have sufficient water. They came bearing large pots of water on their heads.

In the afternoon we started our meetings, opening with a hymn and scripture followed by a Bible lesson. Women had come from the villages nearby, their interest having been aroused by Mama Tembo, a faithful old Christian who had walked from village to village inviting the women to come. We divided the women into reading groups using Laubach's Kikongo primer which is accompanied by many illustrations to facilitate reading. As most of the women had never had an opportunity for any formal education many were a little hesitant to try to read, but the more aggressive ones were working hard. The Laubach theory of "each one, teach one" recommends small reading groups of only two or three to a teacher. We had twenty-three

"teachers" whose reading abilites were considerably varied. Mostly the women needed to have faith and confidence in themselves that they not only had intelligence but were perfectly capable of learning to read as well. As I walked among the different classes to encourage the women I often noticed the teacher holding the book so she or he could read, with the student reading upside-down ! Each morning one of our Banza Manteke teachers and I met with our reading instructors to give them advice in the teaching of reading. Although our reading classes were aimed primarily for the women there were also a goodly number of men who asked to have reading classes for themselves.

Each morning after the tolling of the church bell the women and men assembled in the little church to worship. Following the devotional time a lesson on character development of children was presented with time allowed for group discussion and questions. At the close of the reading classes we distributed a number of Bible verses to the different teachers who in turn taught them to the women. Bible lessons were also studied. The afternoon program was quite similar to that of the morning. One of the most interesting features of the day was the Christian Family Life discussions conducted either by Ruth or our Kimpese Theological student. Everyone entered in heartily to the discussion as they talked about the meaning of a Christian family, their responsibilities, and the things they can share together. One man ventured that while it would take time, eventually they would accept these new ideas.

There are three or four villages on the mountaintop where Luanika is situated. We were invited to one of them one evening to meet with the people. Equipped with lanterns and flashlights we set out on the thirty minute walk, enjoying the cool of the evening. As we entered the village people began to join us on the way to the little mud brick church. One of our teachers conducted the service, and at the close several came forward making known their desire to follow Christ or asking to be received back into the fellowship of the church after being suspended for disciplinary reasons.

At the close of the final evening meeting, held outdoors as the church was too small to contain all who had come, an im-

pressive candle light service followed. As each woman lit her candle she turned to the group and repeated, "I want the love of Christ to shine in my heart and in my home." One hundred women came to indicate their desire to serve Christ in their homes, but how difficult it is for them to remain firm in their convictions when they need someone who can return from time to time to strengthen them spiritually and to encourage them in their Christian growth.

The Institute closed Sunday morning with a worship service. Ordinarily the men sit on one side and the women on the other but this time the families were asked to sit together. At the close of the service they were given an opportunity to make a commitment to Christ asking Him to be the Head of their home.

As we began the long trek homeward our hearts were warmed by the rich and deep experience we had known the past week. We thought of those who had come to know Christ, of the women who had gained a glimpse into the magic of the printed page, of the interest shown in Family Life discussions. Yet at the same time we deeply felt the need for follow-up work to encourage people in their decisions, for it is difficult to remain true to one's convictions when one is mocked for not taking another wife or when one is laughed at for his new-found faith. It had been many years since a missionary had visited the village of Luanika. It is not only difficult to reach, but there are also many villages and the demands on every missionary are great. This same scene is repeated many times over in Congo. Many people are being left unreached because the laborers are too few. The fields are white unto harvest —.

## *BRUSSELS SPROUTS*

by R. N.'s Spinney, Nielsen and Ingalls

CAN you imagine the plight of an instructor who has been blessed with a class consisting of all foreigners with the exception of one? Such is the situation in which our Mlle. Ledocque finds herself this year here at Hôpital St. Pierre in

Bruxelles. It is doubtful whether, when our monitrice accepted this position, it was included in the contract that she be responsible for a group of international students. But since the Belgian government has required that nurses going to Congo these days be certified midwives, St. Pierre, a university hospital, has included among its students just such a group.

This class of student midwives numbers 7. Three of us are trying hard not to bring shame to the name of American Baptists. One girl is from Switzerland and is preparing to go to Congo under an English mission. Two are French-speaking Canadians, and happily there is our one Belgian. If the reader needs to learn humility, may we suggest that you join us. To become a lowly student again — this time in a foreign land — after one has had the exalted feeling of having once attained, is indeed an experience which to quote a fellow missionary, "... is good for the sanctification."

The maternity division of St. Pierre consists of about 50 beds, divided into 5 wards. One of these is given over to women awaiting the arrival of their babies, but who have been hospitalized for one reason or another — for example, a too rapid weight gain. One ward is made up of private rooms and the other three are divided into rooms containing three or four beds.

The typical day in the maternity section at St. Pierre begins, as in most hospitals, at 7:00 a.m. At this time we all gather about a small sheet of paper attached to a metal clip-board on top of a linen cabinet to discover where we will be working the rest of the day. One may be scheduled to bathe little Belgians in the morning, care for the new mothers in the afternoon and be on the official reception committee for the noisy newcomers in the delivery room during the evening. Along with our practical experience in the different *salles* or wards, the student *accoucheuses* (which means us) have weekly courses in obstetrics, pediatrics, psychology and nursing techniques. Then too, approximately every 6 weeks one of us *takes the guard* in the delivery room. "Taking the guard" involves many things—going to bed practically fully dressed, carrying the stethoscope (which never seems to fit in any pocket) and being responsible, under the eyes of the resident doctor, for the labor and delivery of every third woman

admitted to the maternity service. It is usually a busy, slightly schedule-less, but satisfying week, and we find ourselves doing strange things at odd hours—like our washing at 3:00 a.m.

Because we are now deep in the heart of examination time, perhaps we should say a few words regarding our tests at St. Pierre. It may be that some of you enjoy exams and look forward to them with eager anticipation. But to be very truthful, your student midwives don't. For one thing they are quite tired when they get through with a day's work on the wards and don't feel much like studying. Secondly, the French language is a constant hurdle and it takes not a little concentration just to read a few pages of our thick blue texts—not to mention the problem of answering questions about the material in understandable French. The exams are written, oral and practical. Our professors are very kind and understanding, but above all our greatest aid has been the knowledge that we have a God who is able to help us overcome our language barrier. Of course, there have been discouraging experiences, but through them we've learned things we perhaps wouldn't learn any other way. We can truly say that He has proved Himself faithful as we prepare for service in Congo.

## *LOVE STORY A LA CONGO*

by Viola L. Smith

PAUL had been away at school for four years and now he was back, proud possessor of a teaching certificate from our school at Kimpese. He would be the teacher of the highest class in our station school. Naturally, the question of his marriage loomed large in our thoughts and plans.

All during his absence we had been caring—in our boarding school—for his fiancée, a very lovely girl of whom we were all fond. The date of the wedding was being decided when she suddenly fell ill and developed a serious heart ailment. Paul and the members of his family all hovered over her during the days of crisis. Slowly she seemed to be recovering and once more we started talking of a date for the wedding.

Then, out of a clear sky one morning, I found Paul's maternal uncle in the doorway of my office. He had come to tell me that the engagement had been broken. Many years ago death had visited one of the members of the family and Paul's grandmother had been accused of being the witch who had caused the death. She was chased from the village and found asylum elsewhere. Some time later, to prove her good will, she returned to the village and went to the witch doctor to buy the proper fetishes to remove the curse from the village. Family relations once more became friendly. The years passed and when it was time for Paul's family to find a wife for him, they did not hesitate to choose a girl from the family which had once accused a member of their family of being a witch.

Now the girl was ill; the obvious explanation for it must be the fact that the curse had not been removed after all. The girl's family insisted that Paul's mother should go to the witch doctor and buy the proper fetishes to remove the curse. But Paul's parents are Christians and they refused to traffic with witch doctors; they preferred to break off the engagement, and Paul's maternal uncle had come to break the news to me.

I was prepared to find a heartbroken Paul. He came with his parents, the picture of a model and obedient son. After his parents had finished telling the story from the beginning once more, I asked him if he loved the girl enough to brave all the difficulties that would arise if he went against the heathen superstition of the relatives. He had given every indication of being devoted to the girl, and it was a bit of a shock to have him answer in this way:

"I have been away for four years. I have a very fine father who has tried in every way to care for me. In his love and wisdom he found a girl for me. During these four years he has been clothing her and paying her tuition at school. I am very grateful to him for having made this provision for my future. Now, because of this same love and wisdom, he sees fit to take the girl from me. My father's will is my will." And so the engagement was broken.

A few days later an enthusiastic, bubbling-over Paul came to me with the big news that he had found the girl he wanted to marry; she was the teacher of my nursery school! And now, less

than a month later, the wedding is over and a fine Christian home has been established. Paul has the girl that he chose for himself.

But after the wedding the other day, I felt I had to slip up to the hospital to see the girl he did not marry. My heart went out to her. Christ is working miracles in the Congo, wonderful ones, especially in the realm of man and woman relationships. But the miracle was not for this girl; she had become ill, and no self-respecting Congo family would permit a young man to marry a girl who obviously was not strong enough to bear a family and care for them. As she lay there on her bed in the hospital, we could clearly hear the beating of the drums and the singing of songs as friends for hours serenaded the bridal pair.

## *CARS, CARAVAN AND COMMITTEE*

by Eva Shepard

REFERENCE committee is an imposing name which simply means that yearly meeting of representative missionaries and Congolese to take care of between-conference business. It also means reunion with friends, sharing of ideas, studying new and old problems, travel and inspiration AND plenty of hard work by the entertaining station. This year for me it meant the chance to glimpse again two stations where I'd previously served.

The day before we were to leave, nine delegates from lower Congo gathered at Sona Bata. We packed lunches, had the station wagon and pick-up truck checked carefully, looked over lists of things to take to Moanza folk. Yes, Phyllis Benner has brought the 300 rolls requested and the napkins plus all sorts of letters and remembrances for friends at Boko and Moanza. What fun we had telling each other of all the latest events at our stations 'til far into the night. But four o'clock A.M. came around mighty soon !

We were some be-draggled delegates that gathered at Madelyn Albrecht's for coffee and fresh rolls at 4:30 A.M. The trip up was uneventful for Congo—the usual amount of bumps, sand and red clay and to our joy no rain. (It would be on the way

back that we'd have our extra quota of broken springs, flat tire etc.!) The short ferry ride at Popokabaka is always interesting but the nicest part of the trip came as we rolled down the hill and saw Boko. Scotty's handiwork is mighty noticeable and we are so proud of it and so are the Bayakas. The new hospital is almost finished; a women's center well started; the especially neat and attractive teachers' and workmens' homes are up—but oh my the sand! Some day they will get even that controlled.

We were three in our small caravan the next day as the Boko car joined us. When we stopped for lunch we set up a real cafeteria on the side of a new cement bridge. It is amazing the amount of food and drinks eleven folk can consume. The closer we got to Moanza the more beautiful the scenery and the more difficult the narrow, hilly roads. After three years Moanza had really changed. More and more new cement and rock houses for the hospital and the school; the trees well-grown and giving beautiful shade and the mango trees just full of luscious peachlike fruit. One thing hasn't changed—the warm wonderful hospitality of the Bubecks, Marguerite Eldredge and Dorothy Wiseman.

There at Moanza too we met all the other delegates: One Congolese and one missionary from each station and our special guests, Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Swain. It was stimulating to have them with us and to share ideas from our sister stations in other countries, which they had visited. To our delight Remy Malutama was a delegate from Banza Manteke. It was his first meeting with us since returning to Congo after his years of study in Belgium. His understanding of his own people plus his knowledge of European ways and thinking was a great help in many of our decisions.

A preview of what needed to be studied was given to us the first evening by Ben Armstrong. Then we divided into groups for analysis of problems of finance, building, evangelism etc. As different groups worked out ways and means of solving problems there was always a joyous overtone. Of course we can do it. Look at the new missionaries coming to us. Because of them we dared branch out and try to enter some of the many open doors on each of the stations. The discussion that aroused the interest of everyone was the placement of these new missionaries. We

had enough for every station but one. After much discussion and prayer we decided that Boko would be the one to wait a little longer. It was hard to decide but it was even harder to see the disappointment in the faces of the Boko folk when we told them. Why should they be without a new missionary? We and they are so thankful that there are still others on their way to Congo.

We were all thrilled as Léopoldville reported the beginning of their Christian center. Classes for the illiterate women are the most popular, a class for budding musicians; evening classes in English, in French; Christian leadership classes training Christians for a greater witness among the city folk; all are part of its program.

Inspired by their beginnings we planned for two lay-leadership conferences, one in lower Congo at Nselo and one for the Kwango at Kimbambi. We outlined, too, plans for a young people's organization. Study was given to ways of reaching the unoccupied areas in each station's district. As always our hearts ached for our lads working in the commercial centers with so little to draw them to Christ and so much to draw them away. Real plans were made for the construction of permanent church buildings in some of these centers. One other big un-met need is good literature for the people. To make a start toward this we assigned topics to various folk and they are to try to find time to write short stories or articles.

How happy we were as we made these plans in the inspirational atmosphere of the mountain-top. But the accomplishment of these goals—while more painful—will be even more wonderful. So we pray the Lord will give strength and guidance that these dreams may become reality and many more shall love and serve our Saviour.

# A VIRTUOUS WOMAN

by Naomi Lumengu
Moanza Station

"*. . . a woman that feareth Jehovah, she shall be praised.*"
Proverbs 31:30b

MY friends, I want to tell you a little story. In our region at Moanza, there is a woman, she is small of stature but she is industrious in working with her hoe. When you see her, truly she has a face of happiness, and she shows how to welcome strangers.

One day she received the news that the children of her sister had died, so she stood up to go on a journey, for the village of her sister was rather far away. She herself was seven months pregnant. When the palaver of the funeral was finished, she was taken ill and labor pains began. Her husband asked some of the men to help him; they prepared a kipoyi so that they could take her as quickly as possible to the hospital. But while they were in the middle of a big grassy plain, her pains became very strong, and a tiny premature child was born. It was stillborn and the mother seemed to be dying too. Her husband called on the Lord and asked that if possible, his wife might be spared to him. In a short while, she asked for a drink of water. They buried the little baby, and then went on to the hospital where, by the help of God, the mother recovered.

Her husband himself told me this, and added: "When I prayed to God for her life, I said: 'O Lord, if Thou dost will, give life back to my wife. If she dies, I shall never find another woman like her.' If strangers ever come to our house, she receives them happily. She cooks up the best meal she can, then she always calls me out to see the food she has prepared, and we serve it to the guests who are in our house. I have never minded that she is so short, for she is a *good* woman. Beauty does not count, but a woman who fears the Lord will be praised."

Sometimes when we Congo women cook food, we find that there is no salt in the house. Then we have to borrow some in order to make the food taste good and we wonder to whom we can send the child to ask for salt. We would not send to ask just

anybody, only somebody who will be willing to lend with joy. If a woman is cross all the time, strangers do not like to go to her house and neither do we want to ask her for the loan of anything. But if we show habits of kindness and joy to others, then we shall have a way to win them to Jesus.

People look at us to see what kind of life we lead, and especially at those of us who are trying to do some Christian work, they watch ourdaily life, listen to what we say, look at our faces to see if we show happiness or not. Our churches are putting us in the balance to see how we measure up. Our faith in Christ must show itself in our deeds and in our daily life. Faith without works is dead.

Let us resolve, we women of Congo *and of the world*, to show happiness and love to others, for then we can lead them to accept Jesus Christ as their Savior. Whether we are in the kitchen, walking along the path, or soaking manioc in the water—it is all the same. We can show forth Jesus to those around us if we have joy and peace within us. Let us do this in order that the work of God's kingdom may go forward.

## *LIKE OLD TIMES*

Lewis Brown

NGA was our first Graduate at Kikongo from the Bahumbu villages across the Kwango river, and when graduating especially asked to return to begin a Gospel work amongst his own people. That was in 1951, and ever since I have wanted to visit that area. Our opportunity came upon our return from furlough.

One of our teachers was supposed to have made arrangements for carriers, but evidently did a poor job. As a result the first night, after three hours a-foot and an hour and a half by canoe, we found ourselves in a village on the west bank of the Kwango river—but our trail equipment and baggage were still in a village across the river three hours away. Never-the-less we had a good supper of green corn and sweet potatoes and a native mat

was prepared on the platform in the school-church building. From some mysterious source came a brand new sheet under which I hastily crawled to escape the swarms of mosquitoes.

Rains held us up so it was two days later that we finally set off a-foot for Buku–43 kilometres away. It is beautiful rolling fertile country, full of game. Only the fact that some of my carriers were ahead prevented me seeing a big herd of buffalo and later perhaps some elephants. A rank growth of grass some eighteen inches high covered the road bed so we travelled barefooted the first seven or eight miles to save footgear. Later it came on to rain just as we entered an area with the elephant grass eight and ten feet long and which hung from either side into the roadway. After a six hour and a half stiff march we reached Buku and were given a vociferous and enthusiastic welcome. That evening around a big camp fire we brought a message to some two hundred including the chief and elders of the village. It is an indescribable experience to thus open the Word to hungry responsive hearts—for I found them just so.

Ninety-one are enrolled in the three classes of the Regional school here. Another teacher is also from Buku village. The third comes from the Vanga Field, some 600 kilometres away. The task for *Nga* has not been easy. For the first three years he did all the building work on school, dormitories and teachers' houses with the help only of the school boys.

We went by bike next day to Kiamngunu about 30 kilometres where we spent the night. As I spoke that evening, stressing that the receiving of a new heart from God was the first step into the Christian Way--and as Nga translated into their Kihumbu tongue—I noticed that one young man was especially moved. Later I learned that somewhere about 1936 the British Baptist Mission at Léopoldville, had sent teachers into this area. This young man was one of the few baptised before the war years forced them to give up the work because of financial stringencies. He proudly told me that he had only the one wife and that he was still walking in the Way.

Later, from Buku, we went some 35 kilometres in the opposite direction.

On our return trip, while at Fadiaka, a group of the elders

came to ask, "What is this new ruling that we must not go into the forest on Fridays to look for food ?" I was a bit puzzled until my personal 'Boy' intimated the background. About seven or eight months ago some individual had gone thru this area burning fetishes. He had evidently charged a goodly price too. Some of you may recall Don Niles' article last year, and of our concern over some aspects of the fetish burning. I pointed out to them that two facts emphasized that these men were not God's messengers. First, they had charged for burning the fetishes; second, they had imposed this "taboo"on them just as the witch doctors had always done when they made a fetish for a man. When I told them they were in no way bound by the rule, especially as some were, I felt sure, converts, they received this assurance gladly and without question. But the experience again underscores the fact that new-born babes must have nurture and care. Later my 'boy' told me he felt sure he had spotted one of the fetish burners by a big money belt which was well stuffed with currency.

I could imagine some of the difficulties which Nga must have faced in his first months, and it recalled many experiences in the Vanga Field between the years 1930 and 1935 especially. Nga is a lovable young man. When he graduated we had hopes he might soon be a candidate for our Bible Institute. But he has not wanted to leave Buku until he felt sure a real foundation was laid. Our standards have advanced with the years and since Nga was a rather mediocre student we fear he will never be able to pass the entrance exams again. That is but another of many heart aches—to provide workers for the growing and expansion of the Fields, while at the same time keeping young men under training to assure adequate leadership for later spiritual growth in depth of understanding, life and conduct.

Buku is actually a "Groupement" of five villages. The chiefs and some of the elders make a picturesque group, and I wanted a color picture. But would the old chief sit with the others? No sir! He was highly insulted. So I missed what looked like good propaganda material.

I have said so much made me think of old times. At Mbembasi I sat in the circle of a tightly packed group of children. Since I sat very quiet to see what they would do, they quickly got

over any shyness. My trousers were rolled up to the knees, stockings down to shoe tops; they stroked my arms to see if that was really as fuzzy looking hair as it appeared, or not. They even gently pulled a hair or two in my head, to see if it was as grey as that. I surely was reminded again and again on which side of fifty I was living. The 43 kilometre hike back to Fadiaka in a boiling sun was about the last straw but we finally made it. But I also meditated upon what a wonderful organism this body is. What other machine would have carried us that distance on so little fuel and water. And with so little laid out in repairs and upkeep! Some day we'll turn this one in for a Celestial model which we guarantee will out-run any atomic model-to-be.

## *OFF THE RECORD. . .*

THE story of *Mattie Frederickson* is not hers ONLY but is in a way the story of every one of those first missionaries who dared to come to the then unknown and dark continent of Africa. It could have been the story of many others too—if they had lived to fulfill it. But a host of unconquered diseases—black water fever, sleeping sickness, malaria—struck them down; many before they had hardly begun their missionary careers. So in "A Crown of Life" we honor not only Mama Fe but those others whose story it also was—or might have been. The remembrances by two of the Congolese leaders so effectively trained by the Fredericksons, Mama *Ngunga Elisabeth* and Tata *Kikwakwa Moïse*, could be the testimonials of many other Africans—taught by many other pioneers.

The opening poem was written by *Naomi Bubeck*, daughter of the *Ted Bubecks* of Moanza for an English class at Eastern Baptist College. We thought it most appropriate for the C.N.L.

Biggest news around Léopoldville lately is the recently opened Christian Center and the long-awaited school building now going up. First termers *Arley Brown*, evangelistic missionary, and *Lee Weaver*, wife of the mission treasurer, in "One Man's Family" and "We Learn to Read" give us a glimpse of these goings-on. . . "Only One Mountain to Climb" lets us share in

*Marjorie Sharp's* first *nzietelo* when she left hubby and 4 year old Stevie behind at Banza Manteke and joined *Ruth Engwall* on a trip to work with village women..... *Elizabeth Spinney, Rhoda Nielson* and *Joy Ingalls* tell of another sort of effort as they add a year's work in obstetrics to the list of requirements they have fulfilled to become missionaries to the Belgian Congo..... We are happy to include another of *Viola Smith's* little vignettes which add a touch of romance to the News Letter.

*Eva Shepard's* story of a trip to Reference Committee helps point up how far we've come since the days of Mama Fe... Communications between the stations then took weeks or even months. Today a bumpy ride of a day or two will take you from any A.B.F.M.S. station to another. When sets are working you can even TALK back and forth by radio on several of the stations.

There is a little paper called "Congo Hearth" which is put out by the Congo Protestant Council and in a recent issue we found an inspiring little piece written by our own *Naomi Lumengu,* Christian wife, mother and worker at Moanza. We thought you'd like to read it too and so we've reprinted "A Virtuous Woman" here..... *Lewis Brown* and the Kikongo Bible Institute are practically synonymous but on pages 26-29 he rejoices in the fact of getting away at times from the class schedules, building program, etc. as he heads up the general evangelistic work at Kikongo this year. He says it seems "Like Old Times."

— R. U.

NEWS NOTES:

The James Clarks who came to Sona Bata as a family of three are now glad to add the name of little Jeannie (Selma Jean Clark) to the missionary population of that station. She was born at IME on Saturday, March 17.

Another very welcome addition to Sona Bata were the Norman Abells, M.D. The train pulled in five hours late due to washouts and derailments but it was only a few minutes before happy Congolese were rushing up the hill to the station with the glad shout, "The doctor's arrived; the doctor's arrived."

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*See Directory Supplement — p. 31*